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SIPDIS

STATE FOR RM DAS SID KAPLAN AND AF/S
USAID FOR AFR/AA (T.WOODS) AND AFR/SA (P.FLEURET AND
S.COOKE)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [EAID](#) [MI](#)

SUBJECT: STATE/AID JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN: AMBASSADOR'S
ALL-STAFF REVIEW

1. SUMMARY. On February 12, Ambassador Browning conducted a meeting to introduce and review the new State/AID Joint Strategic Plan. The concept behind this plan, how it will be implemented, and what the expected results will be were presented to American and locally engaged staff of both agencies. The Ambassador and the USAID Mission Director highlighted the already strong cooperation between USAID and State in Malawi, and expressed their expectation that the formal alignment of foreign policy goals will benefit all involved. END SUMMARY.

2. In his opening remarks, the Ambassador described the initiative as an opportunity to better define the U.S. foreign policy mission, help to set priorities, and clarify common goals. He suggested that significant administrative and management changes will be the aspect of this initiative first noticed at overseas posts. He emphasized joint State/USAID training and employee exchanges, a unified communications and messaging system, and joint management of planning and resources as resulting improvements. The DCM added that vis-a-vis the Mission's key MPP program goals of strengthening democracy, economic development, and an improved health situation, the joint strategic plan increases the Mission's ability to accomplish objectives.

3. The USAID director noted that the new joint strategy reflects the role of USAID as a foreign policy agency. Because a strong relationship already exists in Malawi, the USAID director commented that the joint strategy puts the development goals of the USG in greater relief but will not significantly affect program activity in the country. USAID's deputy director added that the collaboration with the embassy and the support of the Ambassador in USAID's Triennial Review was noted in USAID/Washington as an example of how the common goals are meant to be operationalized. In the same fashion, USAID participated closely with the embassy in preparing the MPP. To illustrate the strong USAID endorsement of the Joint Strategic Plan and to address some questions raised by USAID staff, the concluding ten minutes of the recent USAID "all hands meeting" with Administrator Natsios was shown.

4. Staff were given the opportunity to ask questions about the plan, its implementation, and effects. Concerns regarding wholesale merging of the two agencies were raised, as were concerns about the impact on staffing levels in certain fields. The Ambassador stated that although he was confident a complete merger unlikely and unnecessary, there may be some staffing ramifications as management efficiencies are identified. If we can successfully accomplish the same goals as two agencies, he observed, the appearance of a need for a combined agency will be diminished. He added that an important objective of any government agency is responding to the needs of taxpayers; streamlining and right-sizing make it easier to determine accomplishments.

5. We understand that the Joint Management Council has established functional working groups to prepare implementation plans, and we look forward to learning about them and implementing their recommendations on the post level. We believe that the Strategic Plan will benefit the work both of State and of USAID in the field.

BROWNING